

PRIME TIME

SIXTY-THREE-YEAR-OLD LINDA RODIN PROVES IT'S NEVER TOO LATE FOR A STELLAR SECOND ACT.

Recently, a mysterious elixir called Olio Lusso began turning up everywhere—and I mean *everywhere*—I went. There it was backstage at Balmain and Marni, where it was used to prep models' complexions before foundation. Makeup artist Fulvia Farolfi started stocking it in her kit, and Gucci Westman liked it so much, she gave a bottle to Julianne Moore. Before long, Laetitia Casta and Chanel Iman were crediting it as the secret to their supernatural skin, and Gwyneth Paltrow started rhapsodizing about it on goop.com. All of which prompted me to wonder aloud: “*Seriously, who is making this stuff?*”

The answer: Linda Rodin, a 63-year-old stylist who never set out to helm a burgeoning beauty brand.

“To think all this started as a little lark!” says Rodin, perched on an over-size couch in her Chelsea apartment. Known for her whip-thin figure, bright-white hair, and lavender horn-rimmed eyeglasses, Rodin effortlessly straddles the line between ageless and age-appropriate. She’s been part of the fashion swirl since the early seventies, when she worked as a model. She tried her hand behind the camera, too, before finding her true calling as a stylist.



HITTING HER STRIDE
RODIN—IN A 3.1 PHILLIP LIM VEST, PORTS 1961 PANTS, AND TABITHA SIMMONS SHOES—WITH HER POODLE, WINKY, IN NEW YORK CITY'S WEST VILLAGE.

“One day my sister said, ‘You don’t take very good pictures, Linda, but the clothes look great.’” In the eighties, Rodin opened a SoHo boutique called Linda Hop (after the nickname she’d gained for her boundless energy), which she stocked with era-defining labels including Calvin Klein and Todd Oldham. For the last 35 years, she’s worked as a stylist for brands like Revlon and Victoria’s Secret.

It wasn’t until 2007, while she was searching for a remedy for her perpetually dry skin, that the idea for her own skin-care line took root. “For years on set, I would try every product on the makeup table and run out and buy all of it after work,” says Rodin, who began dreaming of a single superserum that

could cut through the clutter. Taking measures into her own hands, she stockpiled eleven essential oils—jasmine, rose hip, and sweet almond among them—known to contain skin-brightening, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties, and set to work blending the perfect formula in her bathroom. The trick was to create something hydrating and luxurious but lightweight. “The idea of selling it never crossed my mind,” she says.

But then the requests started rolling in: Impassioned fashion-industry friends to whom she had gifted her minimalist glass vials wanted more. Assembling a small team, Rodin began slogging through the intricacies of FDA guidelines and clinical tests (performed by Manhattan dermatologist David Colbert, M.D.) and taking meetings with Barneys New York and Colette in Paris. She’s since added a body oil and a lip balm, and tapped editorial hairstylist Bob Recine to collaborate on a hair elixir to tame flyaways and boost shine. With a perfume in the works and a luxe hand-and-body cream up next, Rodin is surging forward with characteristic optimism. “Look!” she cries, pulling a lab sample of the latter from her Prada bag. “Isn’t it *amazing?*”

—CATHERINE PIERCY *health* >142

NATURAL WONDERS
RODIN IN HER MODELING DAYS, C. 1970; OLIO LUSSO FACE OIL (FAR LEFT) AND LIP BALM (BELOW).

